

**Department of Transportation  
Project No. 102-324  
Rehabilitation of Bridge No. 04046  
Burnell Boulevard over Metro-North Railroad and Norwalk River  
City of Norwalk**

**September 23, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.  
Room 231, Norwalk City Hall, Norwalk**

**Minutes**

**Present:**

**Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT or Department)**

Julie F. Georges, P.E. Transportation Principal Engineer  
Mary E. Baker, Transportation Engineer  
Joseph Sorcinelli, District 3 Construction  
Robert W. Ike, Rights of Way

**Close, Jensen and Miller, P.C. (CJM)**

E. Allen Randall, P.E. Liaison Director  
Mark F. Levesque, P.E. Project Engineer

**Presentation:**

ConnDOT's Mary Baker and CJM's Mark Levesque presented the following information:

- Mary Baker began the meeting by describing ConnDOT's responsibility for initiating and implementing projects, CJM's role as Consultant Liaison Engineers, and the project goals.
- Ms. Baker summarized the existing Bridge No. 04046 and described the reasons for the project. She noted that the existing bridge is structurally deficient due to the deteriorated condition of the precast concrete slabs in the railroad span and cast-in-place concrete deck in the remaining spans of the bridge. The bridge is scour critical because the pier in the Norwalk River was not founded on piles and was determined to be unstable for calculated scour conditions.
- Mark Levesque described the proposed construction, which involves a first phase construction project which replaces of the precast concrete slab over the railroad. Then a second phase construction project replaces the remaining 3 spans with a two span bridge in the same footprint of the original 3 span portion of the bridge. The pier will be removed from the river and will not be replaced.

- Mr. Levesque explained the reasons that the bridge will be constructed in two independent phases. The first phase will involve only the replacement of the precast concrete slab over the railroad, which will be advanced due to its enhanced deterioration.. A full detour will be implemented to complete this work. Phase 2 will involve replacement of the remaining spans of the bridge. One lane of westbound traffic will be maintained throughout Phase 2 construction.
- Mr. Levesque continued with a synopsis of project impacts with respect to Environmental Considerations, Public Utilities, and Rights-of-Way. Mr. Robert Ike gave a brief overview of the rights-of-way process.
- Mr. Levesque concluded the presentation with statements of the anticipated project cost, funding and schedule. The cost is currently estimated at \$15,000,000 for the entire project of which 80% will be Federal funds and 20% will be State funds. The first phase is anticipated to begin as early as the fall of 2010 with a construction duration of approximately 3 months. The second phase is scheduled to begin in 2012 and end in 2014. The schedule is preliminary and predicated upon the availability of funding and the receipt of all environmental permit authorizations and property acquisitions

#### **Public Comments and Questions:**

Ms. Amanda Brown, a member of the Norwalk City Council, questioned why the pier in the river would be removed but not replaced.

*Mr. Levesque noted that it is best to eliminate in-water foundation units whenever possible to make the replacement structure easier to construct by reducing the amount of in-water work, make the structure more hydraulically adequate, reduce scour potential of the structure, reduce environmental impacts caused by the installation of the structure, and to reduce costs by limiting the number of piers.*

Mr. Richard Bonenfant, a member of the Norwalk City Council, questioned why the State assumed the railroad would remain diesel by not raising the railroad span.

*Mr. Levesque noted that raising the railroad span enough to eliminate functional obsolescence would cause reconstruction of the entire Burnell Boulevard/River Street intersection. Mr. Randall stated that structures with this much vertical underclearance over the railroad can accommodate electrification. Ms. Baker acknowledged that the adjacent bridge carrying Wall Street over the Metro-North Railroad has less vertical underclearance than the subject bridge and there may be several other bridges along this branch of the railroad with similar vertical underclearance.*

Mr. Gjon Sulaj, Director of Operations and Maintenance for the Norwalk Transit District, indicated that they had performed a study assuming the bridge would be closed for the duration of the project and stated that they may prefer to close the bridge entirely to traffic for the second phase of the project if it would significantly reduce the construction duration. Other residents and business owners agreed they would prefer full closure for the second phase if the construction duration would be significantly reduced versus stage construction.

*Mr. Levesque stated that a full closure should reduce the duration of construction versus stage construction, but by how much is not entirely clear. Mr. Sorcinelli indicated that full closure is the preferred by the Contractor over stage construction for the following reasons: the Contractor is provided a safer work area since he/she will not be subjected to working next to live traffic; the Contractor is afforded a larger work area; the Contractor is not limited as much as to how and when components of the structure are constructed; and the finished bridge is a better product since the stage construction joint will be eliminated. Richard Linnartz ,P.E. Principal Engineer of the Engineering and Construction Division of the City of Norwalk's Department of Public Works stated that while the timeline for the overall project is reduced by implementing a detour, undesirable turning movements would have to be made by busses using this detour. He said he is willing to accept these movements for the short closure during the Phase 1 detour, but feels the Phase 2 detour would be too long a period to allow these turning movements to occur. Mr. Linnartz and the members of the Council agreed they would prefer to have more input from other residents, property owners and City officials. They decided to present the options at an upcoming City Public Works Meeting so that a decision could be made that is supported by the City of Norwalk.*

A resident questioned whether during Phase 2, in which the bridge is open to westbound traffic only, would the bridge be open to busses only or would cars also be allowed to use the bridge.

*Mr. Levesque stated the project was currently designed to be open to all westbound traffic, but deferred the question to the City. Mr. Linnartz said that it was still being investigated.*

Chris McMahon, owner of McMahon Ford, located at the corner of Burnell Boulevard and Main Street wanted to know if there would be impacts to his property as a result of the project.

*Mr. Levesque stated that at the present time, no impacts were anticipated, but as the project progresses, if it appears that the property will be impacted, the rights-of-way acquisition process will begin and he will be made aware of any impacts by Mr. Ike's office. Mr. Sorcinelli noted that adjacent property owners would be contacted by the State near the start of construction.*

Mr. Linnartz questioned the limits of the proposed railing replacement at the southwest corner of the bridge at River Street adjacent to the railing. He stated that the railing is continuous from Bridge No. 04046 all the way down River Street to the start of the Wall Street Tunnel. He requested that the railing be replaced for the full length.

*Mr. Levesque responded that the current design shows a termination of the replaced railing just a few feet down River Street from Bridge No. 04046 and the full replacement of the railing was not intended at this time. Ms. Baker stated that further discussions will be held between the City and State regarding this issue.*

**Adjournment:** The Public Information Meeting ended at approximately 8:15 p.m.